Anna Weamys

Marea Mitchell

The Early Modern Englishwoman:
A Facsimile Library of Essential Works

Series II

Printed Writings, 1641–1700: Part 3

Volume 7

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Selected and Introduced by
Marea Mitchell

General Editors
Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITORS

Until very recently, scholars of the early modern period have assumed that there were no Judith Shakespeares in early modern England. Much of the energy of the current generation of scholars has been devoted to constructing a history of early modern England that takes into account what women actually wrote, what women actually read, and what women actually did. In so doing, contemporary scholars have revised the traditional representation of early modern women as constructed both in their own time and in ours. The study of early modern women has thus become one of the most important – indeed perhaps the most important – means for the rewriting of early modern history.

The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works is one of the developments of this energetic reappraisal of the period. As the names on our advisory board and our list of editors testify, it has been the beneficiary of scholarship in the field, and we hope it will also be an essential part of that scholarship's continuing momentum.

The Early Modern Englishwoman is designed to make available a comprehensive and focused collection of writings in English from 1500 to 1750, both by women and for and about them. The three series of *Printed Writings* (1500–1640, 1641–1700, and 1701–1750) provide a comprehensive if not entirely complete collection of the separately published writings by women. In reprinting these writings we intend to remedy one of the major obstacles to the advancement of feminist criticism of the early modern period, namely the limited availability of the very texts upon which the field is based. The volumes in the facsimile library reproduce carefully chosen copies of these texts, incorporating significant variants (usually in appendices). Each text is preceded by a short introduction providing an overview of the life and work of a writer along with a survey of important scholarship. These

works, we strongly believe, deserve a large readership – of historians, literary critics, feminist critics, and non-specialist readers.

The Early Modern Englishwoman also includes separate facsimile series of *Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women* and of *Manuscript Writings*. These facsimile series are complemented by *The Early Modern Englishwoman 1500–1750: Contemporary Editions*. Also under our general editorship, this series includes both old-spelling and modernized editions of works by and about women and gender in early modern England.

New York City
2005

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The title page of this 1651 continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* designates its author as 'Mrs A. W.' It is now the convention to attribute this volume to Anna Weamys, thanks to the notice for a projected second edition of the text in 1690 that supplies the information that the text was written by a 'young Gentlewoman'. The only other information about the author is suggested by the substantial number of commendatory verses that precede the text. That she is 'a young Gentlewoman' provides some sense of her age and class, while the verses themselves all focus on her gender and suggest that she was single. In his edition, Patrick Cullen provides an analysis of these introductory verses. As he points out, more can be gleaned about others connected with the text than about the author herself. The references to her youth, virginity, and status as 'Gentlewoman' may nevertheless position Weamys, Elizabeth A. Spiller suggests, as exactly 'what many contemporary authorities described as the typical reader of romance' (p. 241). Indeed, some copies attest to female readership through handwritten inscriptions such as 'Elizabeth Hyde Her Booke' and 'Dorothea Elcock' (Yale University). However, little else specific is so far known about this woman writer. As with Mrs D. Stanley, author of a modernized *Arcadia* (1725), details about her and her motives for continuing Sidney's work remain tantalisingly absent.

A Continuation of Sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia

Anna Weamys's text is important both for understanding the reception of Sidney by women readers and for tracing the development of prose fiction as it evolved towards the novel. Furthermore, its female heroines illustrate a real concern with how women might navigate the straits of female behaviour in a judgemental and partisan society.

That it was written, published, and taken up by other readers, male and female, attests to the burgeoning interest in prose fiction beyond an elite audience and to the development of a broader and more varied market of readers.

Weamys's *Continuation* contributes to what Blair Worden refers to as 'the afterlives' of Sir Philip Sidney's works (xxii). In this regard, it is ironic that in a time when the full texts of Sidney's own *Arcadia*s are rarely read outside of specialist academic circles, interest in them may be renewed and expanded through consideration of their adaptations, continuations and modernizations. Weamys's text, then, is part of a rich field of reworkings that began with Sidney's own revisions that his sister modified and incorporated in the *Arcadia* of 1593 and that include work by Gervase Markham (1607 and 1613), Lady Mary Wroth (1621), Richard Bellings (1624), Mrs D. Stanley (1725) and Hain Friswell (1867). These reworkings raise significant questions, such as how gender, class, and changing cultural values affect what subsequent writers choose to pick up from Sidney's work and what is of lesser interest to them. Each reworking can be seen both as a reading and interpretation of Sidney's original and as significant in its own right. Weamys, as Cullen notes, chooses to focus on marriage as a celebratory ritual and as an affirmation of female agency made possible through the romance's narrative. She rewrites the tragic ending of Sidney's story of Amphialus and Helena, reuniting them happily. Although Bellings similarly brings this couple together and has them produce 'Haleamphilus' in Sidneian fashion, the two versions are part of quite different patternings that would bear further investigation. Weamys also develops the character Urania, as Wroth too had done in 1621. As Anne Shaver and Bi-Qi Beatrice Lei argue, Weamys's revision reconsiders women's roles in Sidney's *Arcadia* and thus contributes to a history of cultural production and reproduction, notably of the roles of women as readers and writers.

A consideration of the changes that Weamys brings about suggests that the conventional distinctions between romance and the early novel may not be as stable as has been thought. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, the rustics or clowns (Dametas, Miso and Mopsa) are part of the ornate patternings of the text. As characters, they provide comedy that counterpoints the work's serious and central issues. They are

partly rhetorical experiments, contributing to the elaboration and ornamentation, to the seemingly endless themes and variations that attest to the writer's skill. These rhetorical exercises culminate in the ritual games of the eclogues. The development of the lowly Mopsa, though, marks a transition from a figure in a sub-plot to a character with an interest of her own. Sidney began this shift in his *New Arcadia*. In this version Mopsa is given a romance narrative that parodies the courtly romance of Arcadia's princesses and princes. Her role is primarily that of comic relief, of rough foil to a princess's charms. She demonstrates the differences between narrative skilfully handled and narrative mangled. Weamys extends but subtly redirects the liveliness of her character. Her text seems less concerned with courtly rhetoric and rather more with the colour and texture of these effects. In the 1593 *Arcadia*, Mopsa's tale is interrupted and never completed. There is no need for Sidney's Mopsa to finish her tale of the princess (who looks and sounds alarmingly like Mopsa herself). Her story has followed her mother's anti-romance about Cupid, and is suggestive of the ungainly efforts of lower-class speakers. For Sidney, Mopsa and her tale have served their purpose.

Weamys returns to this interrupted story, which is itself an interruption, to give it an ending, although even that is briefly deferred. Weamys fascinatingly continues Mopsa's hyper-romantic tale in ways that partly imitate the class markings present in Sidney's own text but that also foreshadow the realistic detail of the novel. Mopsa's story has glanced back to medieval entrelacement and has enticed and exasperated the reader in its deferral of narrative proper and of the courtship between princes and princesses. Her colloquialisms and proverbs – 'nothing venter, nothing have … Need makes the old wife trot' (p. 127) – position her beneath the sensibilities of the sophisticated reader yet also render her very vividly. Mopsa's engagement with the details of her own story is complete, and perhaps this too suggests differences in the attitudes towards, and experiences of, reading from the sixteenth through to the eighteenth centuries. She is so captivated by her own account of her heroine's gold that she thinks she sees it in front of her and stops her own story. While this is part of a parody of romance deferral and hiatus, it is also part of a character development that prefigures the novel. Although Helen Hackett links Miso's style

back to the old wives' tale in that it is 'digressive, inconsequential, and embroidered by an oral tradition' (p. 112), the continuation of Mopsa's story is also part of a development of psychological characterization that is at some distance from Sidney's two *Arcadia*s, and from the *Old Arcadia* in particular.

If Mopsa's story is expanded and takes on a life of its own in Weamys's text, then other areas suggest Weamys's relative lack of interest. As critics have recently argued, the relationship between Gynecia and Basilius, together with their parallel but markedly different dilemmas, receives some emphasis in the sixteenth-century *Arcadia*. Whether Sidney's treatment of Gynecia can be described as either 'feminist' or 'anti-feminist' is a moot question; nevertheless, Gynecia's 'tragic' treatment as opposed to Basilius' 'comic' treatment seems to attest to the complex dynamics of a Protestant conscience, the conflict between the 'erected wit' and the 'infected will' (Sidney, *Apology*, p. 222) evident in Gynecia and absent in Basilius. Weamys manifests a relative unconcern with Basilius and Gynecia. In her hands they appear to be a happily married couple hard to recognize from the 1593 *Arcadia*. Just as Mopsa's romance takes marriage so much for granted as to leave it out entirely from her love story, so too the already married couple have no interest for Weamys. Perhaps this is also part of the move from the aristocracy of romance to the urbanized middle-class novel, elements of which can also be glimpsed in Stanley's and Friswell's versions. Perhaps, too, if Weamys is exploring narrative as allowing a kind of female romantic agency (Cullen, p. lvi), there is an implicit acknowledgment here that it is the path to marriage, not to the territory beyond it, which allows scope for the consideration of female significance, a rich field of narrative interest successfully and productively explored by later women writers such as Jane Austen.

The title page of the *Continuation* identifies the three main stories that Weamys has picked up. The first concerns Helena and Amphialus, effecting a rehabilitation of Amphialus and allowing him a second chance; the second follows Plangus and Erona; and the third concerns 'the Historie of the Loves of Old Claius and Young Strephon to Urania'. All three stories focus on courtship, the impediments to relationships, and the happy union of the lovers. In all three cases,

Weamys brings to bear on the narratives an awareness of the difficulties of women's position in a way that prefigures the novel. The knowledge of what society might think or say about women's actions, of how tightly controlled women's behaviour must be, how lightly honour seems to rest on the female character, are major concerns for Weamys's Helena. Although Helena's active pursuit of Amphialus is partially licensed by her status as Queen of Corinth, the author's portrait of her quandary is acute. Having nursed Amphialus back to life, Helena does not want to lose him again but cannot woo him overtly. When Amphialus is alive but unconscious she can 'discourse with him, as if he could mind her what she said' (pp. 33–4), directly declaring her love. When he is conscious, she devises the strategy of writing to Philoclea, asking that she direct Amphialus's attention to her, thus obviating the need for any direct statement by her to Amphialus that might endanger her honour and expose her to criticism. When Philoclea obliges, and Amphialus turns to Helena in some uncertainty, Helena's anguished reply exposes the difficulty of having strong feelings while being constrained from expressing them: 'Why … do you force me to repeat my real affections to you so often?' (p. 73)

Similarly, Weamys's account of Urania and her lovers differs significantly from Sidney's version. The neo-platonic love that raises the thoughts of 'silly ignorant shepherds … above the ordinary level of the world' such that 'great clerks do not disdain their conference' (Sidney, p. 63) centres on the absent presence of the ideal Urania, important only for the effect she has on others. Sidney is more concerned with male friendship. The mutual affection of his Claius and Strephon foreshadows the relationship between his aristocratic heroes Musidorus and Pyrocles and the threat to it from love and the female love object, a threat that both sets of friends overcome whatever the outcome of their erotic desires.

Weamys's treatment of the Claius/Strephon/Urania trio is very differently inflected, particularly in ways that suggest different concerns in terms of gender. Weamys's lovers are clearly in competition with each other, and the contest is loaded against Claius, who here is apparently considerably older than Strephon. The reader is thus encouraged to differentiate between the lovers. Basilius's

preference for Claius does neither of them any favours, and – as Pyrocles remarks in one of the few allusions back to Basilius's story in Sidney – can be interpreted as the product of a guilty conscience. As Pyrocles suggests to Musidorus, when Basilius 'pleads for dotage so extreamly', it is at least possible that this indicates that 'he hath not unburdened his conscience yet of his amouressness of me in my Amazons Metamorphosis' (p. 142). Urania's position is now a delicate one. Embodied and under siege, she has more physical presence than her ethereal sixteenth-century counterpart. Whatever the excessive terms used by her lovers, to the narrator she seems to have a more ordinary existence, being a 'fair' and 'prettie' sheperdess (pp. 128, 129). No longer an idealized source of inspiration to, and perfection in, others, she is now in a difficult position that potentially reflects the more ordinary circumstances of female readers and limits her role as a model for female agency. Urania is conspicuously uninterested in Claius and Strephon. Having failed to find a way to handle her lovers, she has made 'patience my friend, and coyness my favourite, neither slighting, nor esteeming their large allusions of my Beautie and their Passion' (p. 147). Then, when she hears that the nuptials of the princes and princesses have been celebrated, she turns the matter of choice and judgement over to the princes, so that she 'might without derogating from my honour, by censorious suspitions, enjoy the societie of him whom the Princes shall select' (p. 147). This may well indicate, as Urania explicitly states, indifference on her part, but it also indicates a sharp awareness of what others might make of her expressing an opinion, making a choice, and – for all intents and purposes – choosing a mate for herself. Although her parents, like those of so many unfortunate women in Wroth's *Urania*, might have made a bad choice for her, her alternative is not for her to choose directly for herself, particularly given that, since she is also pursued by Lalus and Anaxius, her choice is not between two but among four.

The story of Plangus and Erona reflects similar concerns. Plangus's long pursuit of Erona is finally rewarded not thanks to Erona's own action but, again, thanks to her reliance on the wise princes' advice. She is 'bound by so many Obligations to you,' Erona says to them, 'that I cannot suffer my requittal to be a refusal' (p. 111). In this she

stands in stark contrast to Artaxia, the woman who has imprisoned her and who gives herself 'in requital' (p. 6) to Plexirtus as reward for killing, as she thinks, Pyrocles and Musidorus. Helena, Erona, and Urania are all united with men of whom the reader is disposed to approve, but in each case this occurs without the women exchanging modesty for wilfulness. Weamys's heroines seem to get what they want without endangering their reputations.

These three stories that are the focus of Weamys's attention also feature positive relationships among women. It is Philoclea who helps Helena to marry Amphialus so that Helena does not have to compromise herself (pp. 70–71), and it is Erona who presents a tapestry of their stories to Philoclea and Pamela (p. 113). Furthermore, four of the central female characters are described as full of admiration for each other and are seen in mutual appreciation (p. 114). If Sidney's *Arcadia* focuses on male friendships, then Weamys's *Continuation* includes supportive and enabling connections among women. In all these ways Weamys does not simply continue Sidney's *Arcadia* but takes it into different territories, with trajectories that would produce new avenues for women readers and writers.

The text seems to exist in twelve copies of the 1651 octavo edition, printed by William Bentley and sold by Thomas Heath. These are now housed in the following locations: in the UK, at The British Library (Thomason Tracts), the Bodleian Library, and the University of Durham; in the USA, at the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, The Huntington Library, the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), the Newberry Library, Princeton University, the University of Texas (Austin), the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library (UCLA), and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Yale University). There are no substantial differences among copies, and each contains the same incorrect pagination at pages 170 (704), 172 (176) and 188 (788) as well as the same typographical peculiarities such as: 'love-lines' (for loveliness) p. 58, and typographical errors such as 'clallenge' (for challenge) p. 73. The University of Michigan Library copy is also available online as part of the Brown University Women Writers Project. This facsimile edition is of the Folger copy. The only modern edition available is Cullen's. As Cullen points out in his extensive

introduction to his modernized edition, no evidence exists of a second edition, and there is little information about the author other than that provided by the title page and the preliminary poems.

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Wing 1189

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MAREA MITCHELL

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Words that are faint or blotted in the original:

[¶5].20	but ore-look
[¶5].21	'tis spoke in ev'ry book'
[¶7v].4	Terrene
[¶7v].7	beautie view'd
[¶7v].10	did him betray
[¶7v].11	too too long a stay
[¶7v].13	to possess one perfect is
[¶8].7	sure some sparks
[¶8].8	blown
[¶8].10	to inspire
[¶8].11	Blossoms turn
[¶8].12	so Wits ask time to ripen
[¶8].15	like Rays
[¶8].16	please
[¶8v].7	wit
[¶8v].8	wine
[¶8v].9	heard
[¶8v].10	Main
[¶8v].15	Thine
11.8	sat
11.9	to rest
11.10	branched
11.11	refreshed
11.12	but
34.11	an
34.13	purchase
34.14	never
34.15	be the Princess
34.16	block in
34.17	continue
34.18	over
34.19	hopeless yet
34.20	faithfull friend
34.21	affections to one
34.23	that will accept
142.11	Arbour-walk
142.12	sweet societie
142.13	attented
142.14	supposition

A

CONTINUATION

of

Sir PHILIP SYDNEY'S

ARCADIA:

Wherein is handled

The LOVES of

AMPHIALUS and HELENA

Queen of *Corinth*, Prince

PLANGUS and ERONA.

With the Hiſtorie of the LOVES of Old *Claius* and Young *Strephon* to *Urania*.

Written by a young Gentlewoman, Mris A. W.

LONDON,
Printed by *William Bentley*, and are to be ſold by *Thomas Heath*, near the *Pyazza* of the *Coven-Garden*.
Anno Dom. 1651.

Joyce Josselyn
her Booke

Richard Bridgeman
His Book 1671